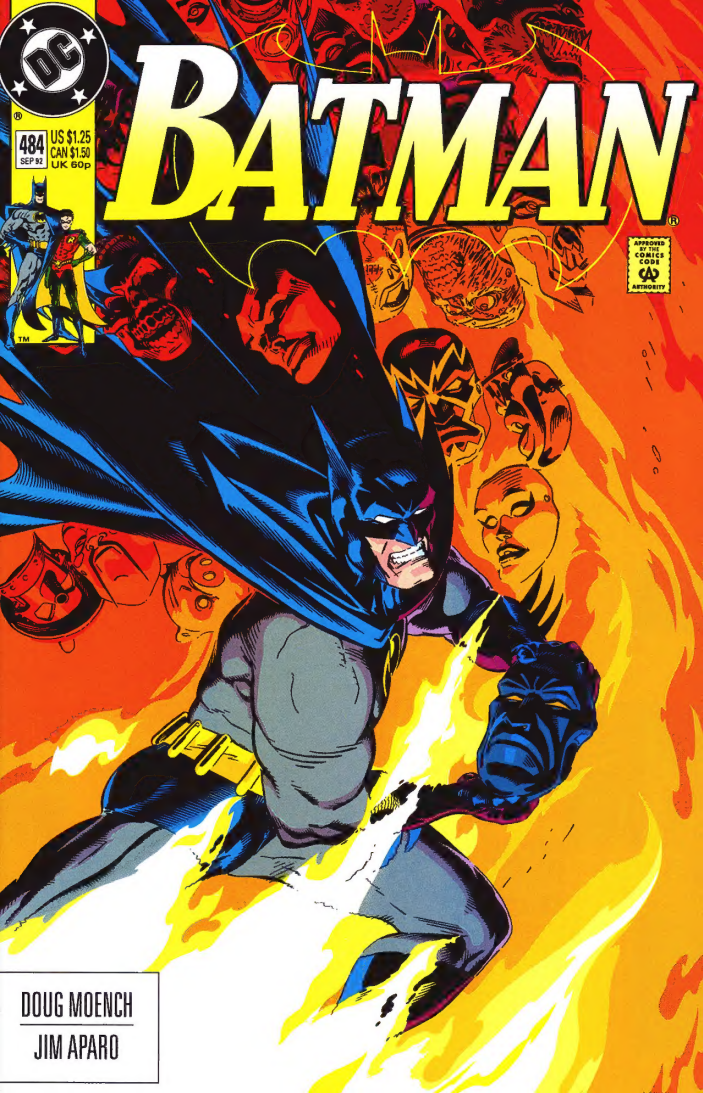
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BATMAN
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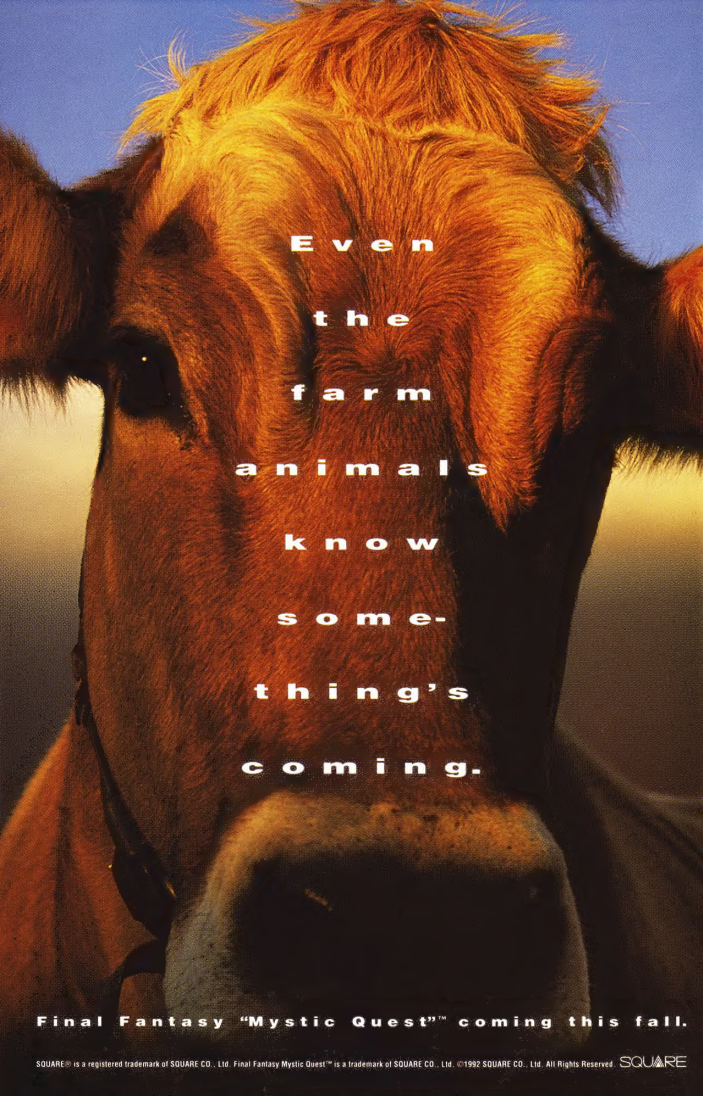
UK 60p
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DOUG MOENCH
JIM APARO



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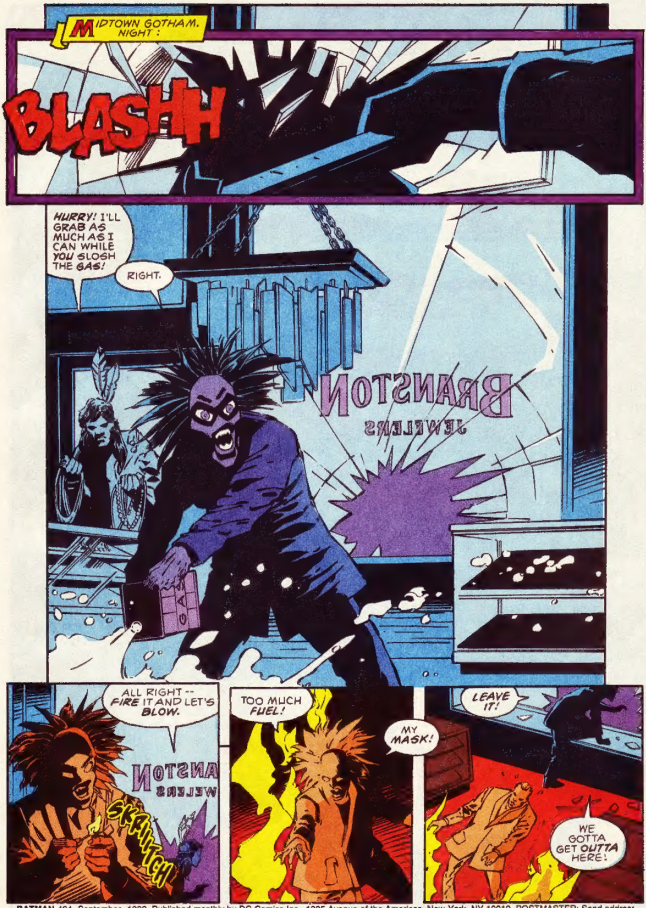

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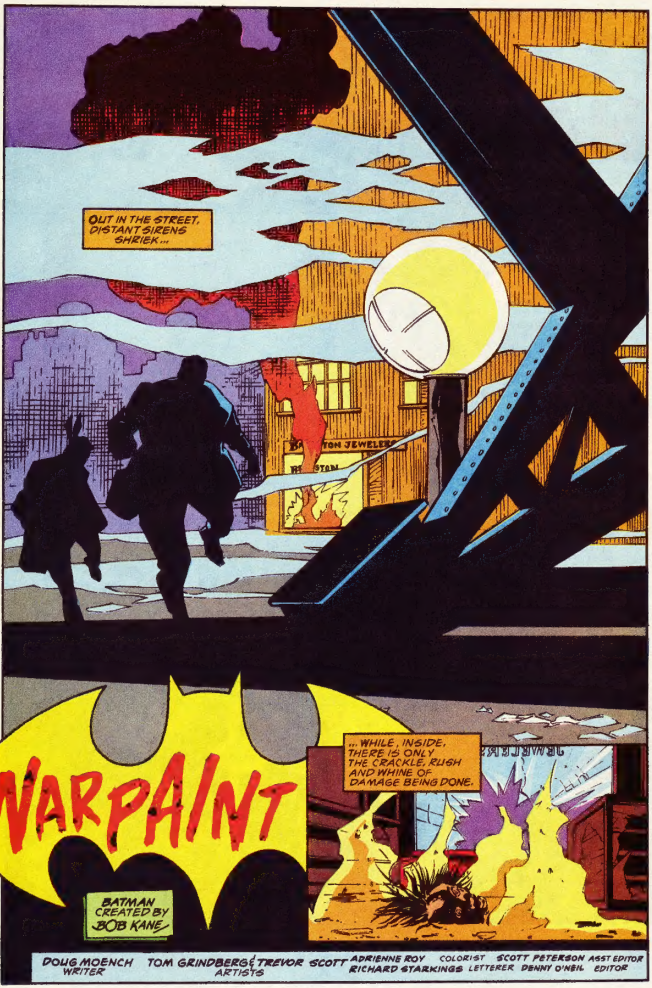
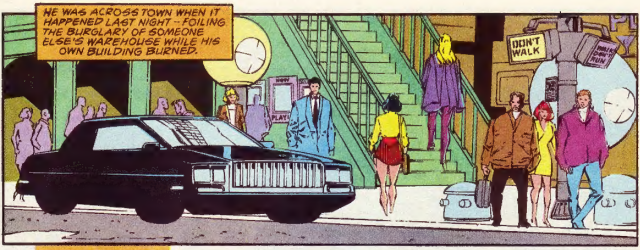
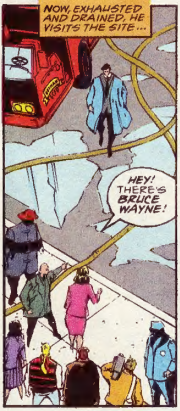

OUT IN THE STREET, DISTANT SIRENS SHRIEK...
...WHILE, INSIDE, THERE IS ONLY THE CRACKLE, RUSH AND WHINE OF DAMAGE BEING DONE.
WARPAINT
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE
DOUG MOENCH WRITER
TOM GRINDBERG & TREVOR SCOTT ARTISTS
ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST
SCOTT PETERSON ASST EDITOR
RICHARD STARKINGS LETTERER
DENNY O'NEIL EDITOR


HE WAS ACROSS TOWN WHEN IT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT - FOILING THE BURGLARY OF SOMEONE ELSE'S WAREHOUSE WHILE HIS OWN BUILDING BURNED.
DON'T WALK

HE DIDN'T EVEN HEAR ABOUT IT TILL DAWN. THE FIRE LONG SINCE DOUSED BY THEN.
THE MORNING WAS SPENT DISCUSSING THE SITUATION WITH LUCIUS FOX.
BRAZILIA IMPORTS


NOW, EXHAUSTED AND DRAINED, HE VISITS THE SITE ...
HEY! THERE'S BRUCE WAYNE!

MR. WAYNE, AS OWNER OF THE BUILDING, COULD YOU SPECULATE AS TO THE FIRE'S ORIGIN?
THAT'S BETTER LEFT TO THE EXPERTS. I'M JUST GLAD NO ONE WAS HURT...

AND, THANKS TO THE QUICK ACTION OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT - AND A MODERN SPRINKLER SYSTEM - OVERALL DAMAGE WAS KEPT TO A MINIMUM.
WE HEARD THE JEWELRY SHOP SPRINKLERS FAILED.
DO YOU THINK THAT WAS ACCIDENTAL?

I, UH... REALLY DON'T KNOW IF --
THERE'S THE FIRE CHIEF - MAYBE HE'S READY TO GIVE HIS STATEMENT.

IT WAS HARDLY ACCIDENTAL, BRUCE, AND YOU KNOW IT.
THE SIGHT OF HER IS AS ABRUPT AS A PHYSICAL BLOW.
VICKI...
BRANSTON JEWE
THE FIREMEN SAY THE WINDOW WAS SMASHED WHEN THEY GOT HERE.
THEN THE FIRE WAS VANDALISM.
WHO BREAKS AND ENTERS A JEWELRY STORE JUST TO SET A FIRE?
ALL RIGHT, MAYBE IT WAS SET TO COVER A BURGLARY.
WHEN THEY COULD HAVE BEEN LONG GONE IN THE TIME IT TOOK TO SET IT?
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED?
IT'S MORE LIKE ASSAULT THAN BURGLARY OR ARSON--
--ASSAULT ON THE BUILDING ITSELF--
--AND IF I DIDN'T KNOW YOU BETTER, I'D SUSPECT THE OWNER OF TRYING TO COLLECT ON THE FIRE INSURANCE.
I ASSURE YOU, VICKI, I'M STILL QUITE SOLVENT.
MAYBE THE TENANT--THE JEWELER--TO COLLECT THE INSURANCE ON HIS MERCHANDISE...
BRANSTON? THE MOST EXCLUSIVE JEWELER IN GOTHAM? I DOUBT IT...
BUT HOW ABOUT SOME LUNCH..?
WE COULD DISCUSS IT FURTHER, KICK IDEAS BACK AND--
I'M SORRY BRUCE, BUT I ALREADY GOT A LUNCH DATE.
AND THAT WOULD BE... HORTON SPENCE?
YES... STILL.
MMM. THEN... IT WAS NICE SEEING YOU AGAIN, VICKI.
YES... SO LONG, BRUCE.

Back by popular demand.
PET SEMATARY TWO
August '92

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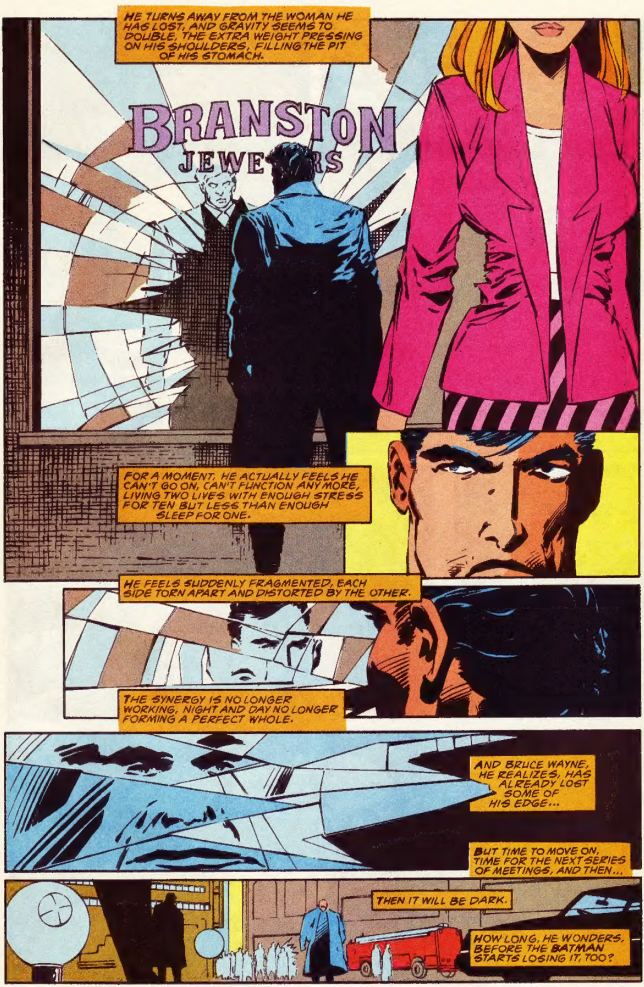
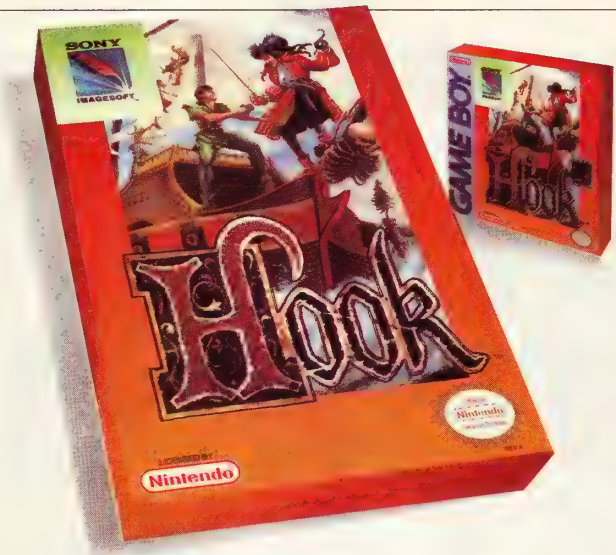

HE TURNS AWAY FROM THE WOMAN HE HAS LOST, AND GRAVITY SEEMS TO DOUBLE, THE EXTRA WEIGHT PRESSING ON HIS SHOULDERS, FILLING THE PIT OF HIS STOMACH.
BRANSTON
FOR A MOMENT, HE ACTUALLY FEELS HE CAN'T GO ON, CAN'T FUNCTION ANY MORE, LIVING TWO LIVES WITH ENOUGH STRESS FOR TEN BUT LESS THAN ENOUGH SLEEP FOR ONE.
HE FEELS SUDDENLY FRAGMENTED, EACH SIDE TORN APART AND DISTORTED BY THE OTHER.
THE SYNERGY IS NO LONGER WORKING, NIGHT AND DAY NO LONGER FORMING A PERFECT WHOLE.
AND BRUCE WAYNE, HE REALIZES, HAS ALREADY LOST SOME OF HIS EDGE...
BUT TIME TO MOVE ON, TIME FOR THE NEXT SERIES OF MEETINGS, AND THEN...
THEN IT WILL BE DARK.
HOW LONG, HE WONDERS, BEFORE THE BATMAN STARTS LOSING IT, TOO?

NIGHT -- AND HE FEELS BETTER SOMEHOW. BEYOND EXHAUSTION -- ADRENALIN IN THE DARKNESS. THE SHADOWS INVIGORATING HIM...
THE SHADOWS. AND SOMETHING MORE...
HIS MISSION -- THIS TIME A PERSONAL ONE.
A CLUE OVERLOOKED BY THE FIRE INSPECTOR?
OR SIMPLY THE FLOTSAM IT APPEARS TO BE?
THE ANSWER CAN BE FOUND... IN THE CAVE.
WHILE, AT THE SIONIS FAMILY CRYPT IN RAVENSWOOD CEMETERY.
KNOW THAT THE MASK DESTROYS ONE IDENTITY WHILE CREATING ANOTHER.
KNOW THAT THE MASK RECREATES ITS WEARER.

KNOW THAT, THROUGH THE SUBLIMATION OF PERSONALITY, INHIBITIONS DIE AND THE NATURE OF THE WEARER IS ALTERED --SO THAT DEEPER DRIVES AND MORE PRIMITIVE INSTINCTS RISE TO THE SURFACE.
SOON, YOU WILL ALL BE NEW BEINGS -- AND I WILL BE YOUR MASTER.
I AM BLACK MASK -- AND I WILL MAKE YOU RICH.
IN RETURN, YOU MUST SERVE ME IN OTHER WAYS -- IN MATTERS NOT OF LOOT BUT OF VENGEANCE.
THERE IS ONE WHO MUST PAY FOR DESTROYING MY FORMER IDENTITY...
...ONE WHO MUST DIE FOR GIVING BIRTH TO MY NEW IDENTITY--
-- FOR CREATING BLACK MASK.

NOW CHOOSE YOUR MASKS...
...AND BECOME INITIATED INTO THE FALSE FACE SOCIETY OF GOTHAM.
NOT YOU, TATTOO.
LIKE ME, YOU ALREADY WEAR A PERMANENT MASK--
--MINE BURNED INTO MY FACE, YOURS PIERCED AND DYED...
CAN YOU SHOOT?
YEAH.
PROVE IT.
BRAM
PRUTCH
RIGHT BETWEEN THE BULL'S EYES.
NOT BAD... BUT HOW ARE YOU WITHOUT A GUN?
BETTER.



GET HOOKED!

You've just boarded Hook's ship. Your blood is pumping and a chill races down your spine. You're about to do battle with the most infamous pirate of them all, Captain Hook, the fiend who's kidnapped your children and sworn never to let them go. Suddenly Hook spots you and in one leap is at your throat. But with a quick spin you take flight over the sail and with a single thrust almost pin him to the mast.

As Peter Pan, this is the fight of your life. Everything that came before — your duel with Rufio, your dive to the ship wreck, even your battles against the pirates and creatures of Neverland — are nothing compared to this moment. Hook, the video game. Multiple levels of incredible excitement. Fantastic graphics. Available now for NES and GameBoy. Get Hook. Before Hook gets you!

The most infamous pirate of them all

Walking the plank

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Don't miss another issue! All orders postmarked or faxed by August 31st, 1992, get a Free Limited Edition Spiderman 2099 poster!

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Professor X is mortally wounded by Cable and the X-Men vow revenge in this excellent new 12-part crossover!

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BLAZING CHAIN

All new! Features everything you wanted to know about Lobo's sex life - but knew better than to ask!
Mature Reader Content!

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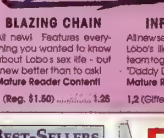

INFANTICIDE

All new series by Keith Giffen! Lobo's illegitimate children team together to take down "Daddy Dearest"!
Mature Reader Content!

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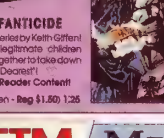

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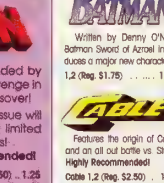

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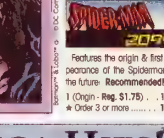

Features the origin & first appearance of the Spiderman of the future. **Recommended!**

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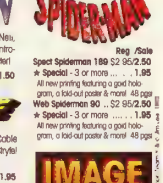

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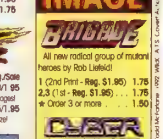

BRIDGE

All new radical group of mutant heroes by Rob Liefeld!

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CYBER FORCE

A new team of mutant heroes!

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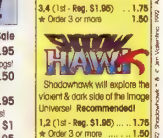

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All new violent superhero!

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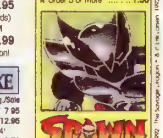

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Shadowhawk will explore the violent & dark side of the Image Universe! **Recommended!**

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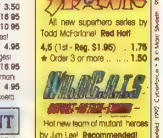

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All new superhero series by Todd McFarlane! **Red Hot!**

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Hot new team of mutant heroes by Jim Lee! **Recommended!**

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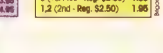

YOUNGBLOOD

The next generation of mutant heroes by Rob Liefeld! **Hot!**

Art of Extreme 1 ..... **$5.95**
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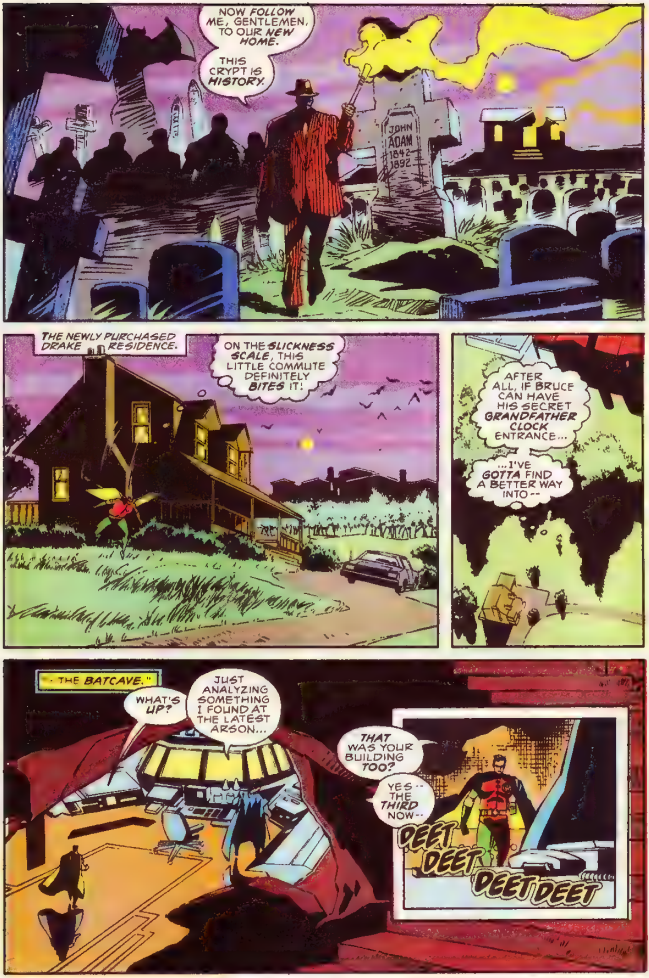
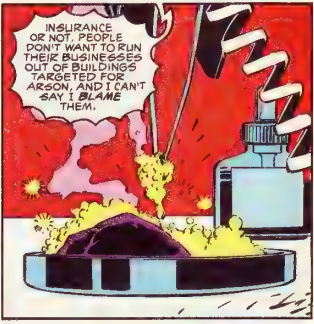
TUPENG -- TEST HIM.
THAP
CHUD
KRATCH
AUGH-K!
TUPENG, IT APPEARS YOU'LL NEED A NEW MASK--
ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE, HOWEVER, SINCE YOU'VE JUST BEEN DEMOTED.
TATTOO: YOU'RE MY NEW LIEU-TENANT.
THE REST OF YOU, DON YOUR MASKS--
--AND WELCOME TO THE FALSE FACE SOCIETY.
FHWOOM


NOW FOLLOW ME, GENTLEMEN, TO OUR NEW HOME.
THIS CRYPT IS HISTORY.
JOHN ADAM 1842 1892
THE NEWLY PURCHASED DRAKE RESIDENCE.
ON THE SLICKNESS SCALE, THIS LITTLE COMMUTE DEFINITELY BITES IT!
AFTER ALL, IF BRUCE CAN HAVE HIS SECRET GRANDFATHER CLOCK ENTRANCE...
...I'VE GOTTA FIND A BETTER WAY INTO--
"- THE BATCAVE."
WHAT'S UP?
JUST ANALYZING SOMETHING I FOUND AT THE LATEST ARSON...
THAT WAS YOUR BUILDING TOO?
YES-- THE THIRD NOW--
DEET DEET
DEET DEET

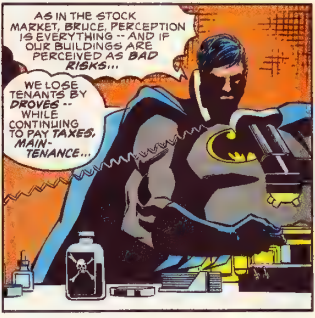
BRUCE? LUCIUS FOX HERE -- I'M AFRAID WE'VE JUST HAD OUR FOURTH... THE GRAYSPIRE BUILDING.
FORTUNATELY, THE FIRE'S ALREADY BEEN CONTAINED, BUT EVERYONE KNOWS WE OWN IT, AND IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THE PRESS CONNECTS THE FIRST TWO ARSONS TO --
EASY, LUCIUS...

...AT THIS RATE, WE COULDN'T HOPE TO DODGE PUBLICITY FOREVER.
OF COURSE NOT, BRUCE, BUT MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT, SOMEONE'S TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING --
-- OR EVEN HURT YOU.
WE'RE HARDLY BEING HURT WITH THE INSURANCE WE'VE GOT.

IF IT KEEPS UP, OUR INSURANCE WILL BE CANCELED -- AND BEYOND THAT, FIVE OF OUR LARGEST TENANTS HAVE DECIDED TO MOVE OUT.
OTHERS ARE CONSIDERING IT.

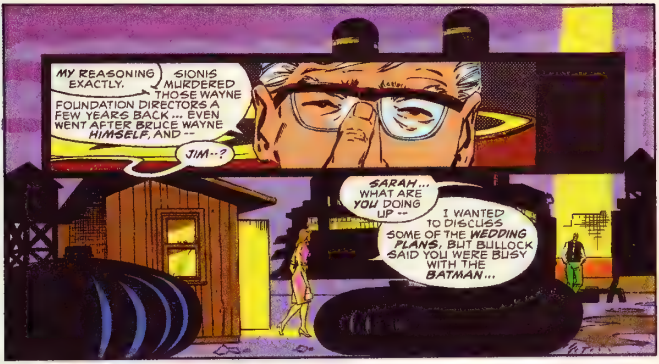

INSURANCE OR NOT, PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO RUN THEIR BUSINESSES OUT OF BUILDINGS TARGETED FOR ARSON, AND I CAN'T SAY I BLAME THEM.

NOR I, LUCIUS. BUT... THE BEST BUILDINGS IN GOTHAM, ALL IN PRIME LOCATIONS... BEING DEVALUED BY THE MERE POSSIBILITY OF THREAT?

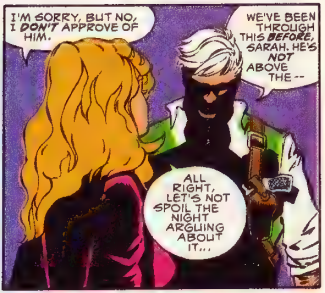

AS IN THE STOCK MARKET, BRUCE, PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING -- AND IF OUR BUILDINGS ARE PERCEIVED AS BAD RISKS...
WE LOSE TENANTS BY DROVES -- WHILE CONTINUING TO PAY TAXES, MAINTENANCE...

RIGHT -- AND SINCE THE MAJORITY OF THE WAYNE FORTUNE IS TIED UP IN ALL THAT PRIME REAL ESTATE ...
WE STAND TO LOSE EVERY-THING -- INCLUDING FUNDING FOR THE WAYNE FOUNDATION.
WELL, IT'S A LONG WAY FROM THAT...
.. BUT THAT IS THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO -- UNLESS THE PERCEPTION IS CHANGED.
WHICH MEANS THE FIRES MUST BE STOPPED AND STOPPED FAST.
COMMISSIONER GORDON SAID HE'LL DO WHAT HE CAN --
.. BUT HE'S ALREADY UNDERMANNED FROM THE LATEST BUDGET CUTS.
WHICH WILL MAKE "LAW AND ORDER" ARMAND KROL'S MAYORALTY BID ALL THE MORE APPEALING TO QUITE A FEW VOTERS.
MORE'S THE PITY -- BUT, IN ANY CASE, I'VE ALREADY HIRED MORE PRIVATE SECURITY FOR ALL THE BUILD-INGS.
GOOD WORK, LUCIUS -- KEEP ME POSTED.
LOOKS AND REACTS LIKE HIGH-GRADE LATEX, BUT IT'S NOT PAINT.
CAN YOU HACK INTO THE CHEMICAL COMPANIES AND SEE --
WHO THEIR MOST INTERESTING LATEX CUSTOMERS ARE? GOTCHA.

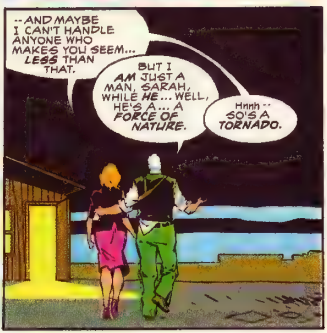
PRETTY MUNDANE LIST... EXCEPT FOR SEVERAL HOLLYWOOD OUTFITS...
CROSS-CHECKING SHOWS THEY MANUFACTURE FACIAL APPLIANCES AND MASKS FOR THE MOVIE STUDIOS, PRIVATE COLLECTORS. EVEN THE HALLOWEEN TRADE.
MASKS...
Ahem...
YES, ALFRED?
THE SIGNAL, SIR...
"...SWEEPING THE CLOUDS QUITE INSISTENTLY."
--BEEN THINKING ABOUT THESE ARSONS AND THE LIST OF INMATES WHO RECENTLY ESCAPED FROM ARKHAM.
ONE OF THEM WAS--
ROMAN SIONIS.
THEN MY HUNCH IS RIGHT? YOU'VE SEEN HIM BACK IN GOTHAM?
NO-- BUT I FOUND A CLUE--
...AND ALL THE TORCHED BUILDINGS ARE OWNED BY THE WAYNE CORPORATION.

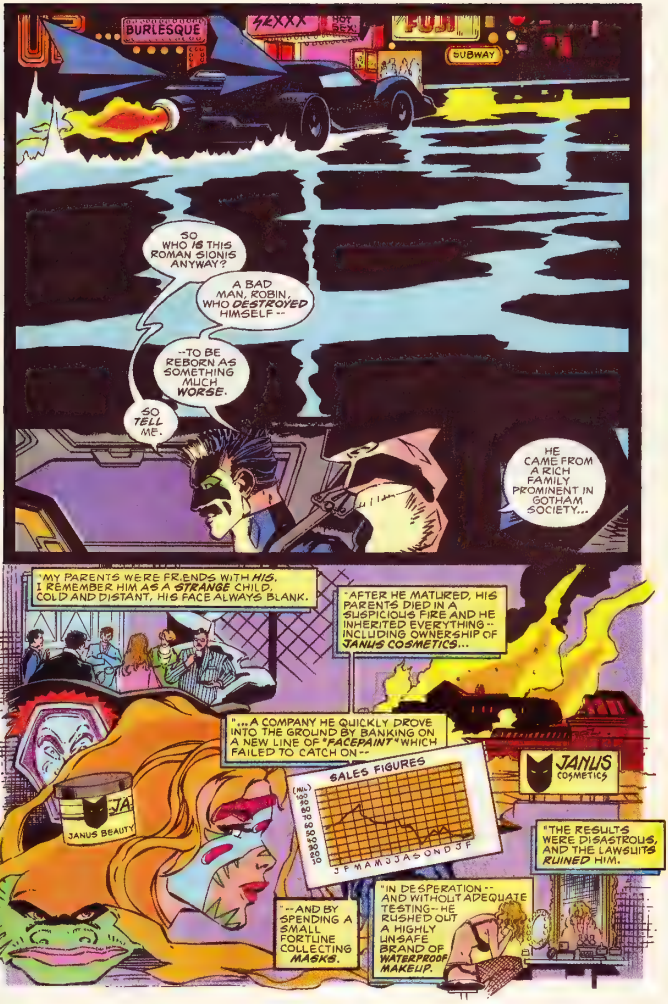

MY REASONING EXACTLY.
SIONIS MURDERED THOSE WAYNE FOUNDATION DIRECTORS A FEW YEARS BACK... EVEN WENT AFTER BRUCE WAYNE HIMSELF, AND --
JIM--?
SARAH... WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP --
I WANTED TO DISCUSS SOME OF THE WEDDING PLANS, BUT BULLOCK SAID YOU WERE BUSY WITH THE BATMAN...

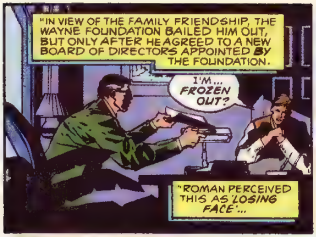
HE'S, UH... GONE NOW, SARAH... BUT THE WAY YOU SAY HIS NAME -- YOU STILL DON'T APPROVE OF HIM, DO YOU?
OF A MASKED VIGILANTE ABOVE AND BEYOND THE LAW? ABOVE AND BEYOND EVERY-THING YOU AND I STAND FOR?

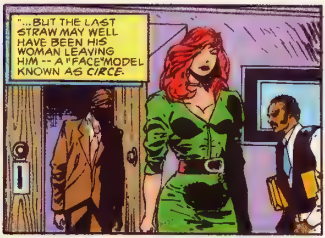

I'M SORRY, BUT NO, I DON'T APPROVE OF HIM.
WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS BEFORE, SARAH. HE'S NOT ABOVE THE --
ALL RIGHT. LET'S NOT SPOIL THE NIGHT ARGUING ABOUT IT...

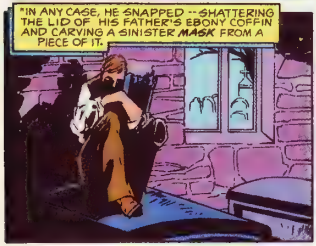
MAYBE I JUST RESENT HIM... FOR MORE PERSONAL REASONS.
PERSONAL?
THE FACT THAT YOU SEEM TO DEPEND ON HIM. IN MY EYES, YOU'RE THE STRONGEST MAN WHO EVER WORE A COP'S BADGE--

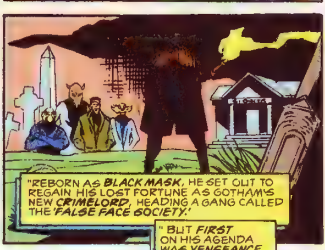

--AND MAYBE I CAN'T HANDLE ANYONE WHO MAKES YOU SEEM... LESS THAN THAT.
BUT I AM JUST A MAN, SARAH, WHILE HE... WELL, HE'S A... A FORCE OF NATURE.
Hmmm -- SO'S A TORNADO.

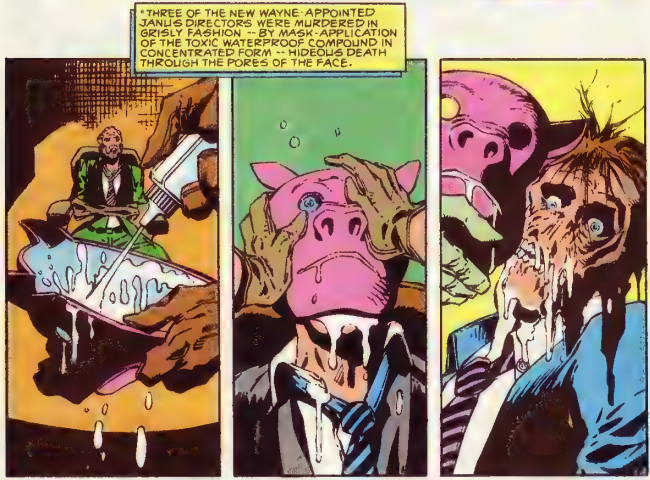

BURLESQUE
SEXXX
HOT SEXY
FUN
SUBWAY
SO WHO IS THIS ROMAN SIONIS ANYWAY?
A BAD MAN, ROBIN, WHO DESTROYED HIMSELF --
--TO BE REBORN AS SOMETHING MUCH WORSE.
SO, TELL ME.
HE CAME FROM A RICH FAMILY PROMINENT IN GOTHAM SOCIETY...
"MY PARENTS WERE FRIENDS WITH HIS. I REMEMBER HIM AS A STRANGE CHILD. COLD AND DISTANT, HIS FACE ALWAYS BLANK.
"AFTER HE MATURED, HIS PARENTS DIED IN A SUSPICIOUS FIRE AND HE INHERITED EVERYTHING -- INCLUDING OWNERSHIP OF JANUS COSMETICS...
"...A COMPANY HE QUICKLY DROVE INTO THE GROUND BY BANKING ON A NEW LINE OF "FACEPAINT" WHICH FAILED TO CATCH ON --
JANUS COSMETICS
SALES FIGURES
(MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)
J F M A M J J A S O N D J F
JANUS BEAUTY
"THE RESULTS WERE DISASTROUS, AND THE LAWSUITS RUINED HIM.
"-- AND BY SPENDING A SMALL FORTUNE COLLECTING MASKS.
"IN DESPERATION -- AND WITHOUT ADEQUATE TESTING -- HE RUSHED OUT A HIGHLY UNSAFE BRAND OF WATERPROOF MAKEUP.


"IN VIEW OF THE FAMILY FRIENDSHIP, THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BAILED HIM OUT, BUT ONLY AFTER HE AGREED TO A NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTED BY THE FOUNDATION.
I'M... FROZEN OUT?
"ROMAN PERCEIVED THIS AS LOSING FACE..."


"...BUT THE LAST STRAW MAY WELL HAVE BEEN HIS WOMAN LEAVING HIM -- A FACE-MODEL KNOWN AS CIRCE.


"IN ANY CASE, HE SNAPPED -- SHATTERING THE LID OF HIS FATHER'S EBONY COFFIN AND CARVING A SINISTER MASK FROM A PIECE OF IT.


"REBORN AS BLACK MASK, HE SET OUT TO REGAIN HIS LOST FORTUNE AS GOTHAM'S NEW CRIMELORD, HEADING A GANG CALLED THE FALSE FACE SOCIETY.
" BUT FIRST ON HIS AGENDA WAS VENGEANCE.


"THREE OF THE NEW WAYNE-APPOINTED JANUS DIRECTORS WERE MURDERED IN GRISLY FASHION -- BY MASK-APPLICATION OF THE TOXIC WATERPROOF COMPOUND IN CONCENTRATED FORM -- HIDEOUS DEATH THROUGH THE PORES OF THE FACE.

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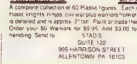

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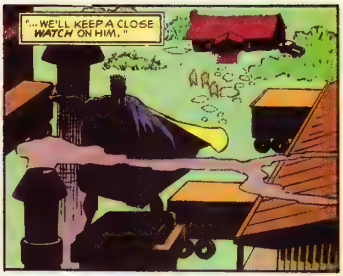
"I FINALLY TRACKED HIM TO THE OLD SIONIS FAMILY ESTATE, WHICH HE HAD JUST SET ABLAZE IN THE FINAL ACT OF DESTROYING HIS FORMER IDENTITY.
"HE FLED-- BACK INTO THE FLAMES.
"I MANAGED TO SAVE HIM...
"...BUT BY THEN THE IMPRINT OF HIS EBONY MASK HAD BEEN PERMANENTLY BURNED INTO HIS FACE..."
...IN A SENSE, HE'S NOW FACELESS AND MASKLESS... BUT FOREVER MASKED BY HIS FACE.
AND HE WAS SENT TO THE ASYLUM -- UNTIL HE ESCAPED WHEN JEREMIAH ARKHAM TOOK OVER?
YES... AND NOW HE'S BACK -- DEFINITELY IN GOTHAM.
SIONIS

PLATE 27
SALE
WE HEAR A WOMAN LIVES DOWN HERE -- KNOWN AS "THE WITCH" OR "THE HAG..."
END O' THE PLATFORM.
PUT IT ON, CIRCE...
TIME TO FACE BLACK MASK AGAIN.
THAT'S SOME SCAR, FRIEND.
NOT MY REAL FACE.
NO?
MY REAL FACE IS THE ONE I SAW IN THE MIRROR BEFORE SOME EX-PUG BROKE THE MIRROR AND CUT ME.
LIME HOUSE
Rusty PELICAN
YOU TRYIN' TO GET AT SOMETHIN'?
YEAH. I HEAR THE FALSE FACE SOCIETY IS BACK IN BUSINESS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MASKS.

I DO BELIEVE I LIKE YOU EVEN BETTER THIS WAY, CIRCE... NOW THAT YOU'RE ALMOST LIKE A REAL MANNIKIN...
ISN'T SHE, TATTOO?
A LIVING DOLL, BLACK MA--
TOK TOK TOK
NEW GUY WANTS TO JOIN UP, BOSS.
YOU SEARCHED HIM?
BEFORE WE CAME, HE'S GOT OTHER SCARS, BUT NOT A WIRE ON HIM -- ANYWHERE.
AND WHAT'S HIS NAME?
TEK
GOT NO NAME.
I'M ALREADY DEAD...
HOW EXTRA-ORDINARY -- ALREADY DEAD...
IN THAT CASE, DO ALLOW ME TO CHOOSE YOUR MASK...
...AND NOW YOU'VE GOT A NAME AGAIN..
SKULLFACE!

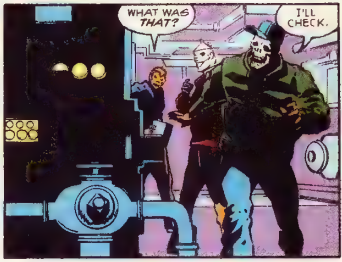
THESPIS, TUPENG -- TAKE SKULLFACE HERE ON TONIGHT'S OUTING...
IT FITS.
... AND INITIATE HIM INTO THE FALSE FACE SOCIETY.
YOU GOT IT, BOSS --


"... WE'LL KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON HIM."

ALL RIGHT, WE BREAK IN THROUGH THE SERVICE ENTRANCE, GO DOWN TO THE BASEMENT, AND TORCH THE PLACE.
NO GUARDS? NO ALARMS?
THE GUARDS HAVE BEEN PAID -- TO SHUT OFF THE ALARMS.
KELVIN

SERVICE ENTRANCE
SPRAKT
SLSH
SPSH

PLUFT


WHAT WAS THAT?
I'LL CHECK.

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"He reached for me as the bullet broke his breastbone. There was no one else to reach for. Strangers to each other, we were both greater strangers to the hordes of New York. He was a beatnik. I was a Martian."
MARTIAN
Manhunter
american secrets
THREE ISSUES IN DC'S PRESTIGE FORMAT
BY GERARD JONES AND EDUARDO BARRETO
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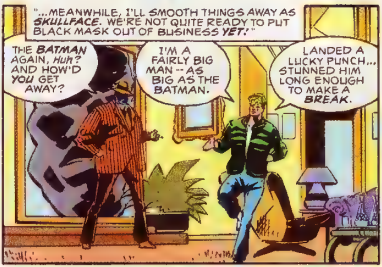
ANYTHING BACK THERE?
NOTHING.
MUST'VE BEEN A BIRD OR SOMETHING -- CAUGHT IN THE FURNACE FLUE.
WELL, HURRY IT UP THEN.
SKRZZT
WE'RE READY TO --
FWPT
WHAT THE--?!
PLAYING WITH FIRE, ARE YOU?
DANGER
GET HIM! HE'S JUST A KID!
YEAH, BUT WITH A FULL GROWN--
--PARTNER!

SWUKK

TAKE THESE TWO IN, ROBIN -- AND TELL ALFRED TO GET WORD TO LUCIUS FOX...
HE'S HIRING FROM THE WRONG SECURITY AGENCY. NOTHING -- AND NO ONE -- IS SAFE UNTIL HE MAKES NEW ARRANGE-MENTS...


"...MEANWHILE, I'LL SMOOTH THINGS AWAY AS SKULLFACE. WE'RE NOT QUITE READY TO PUT BLACK MASK OUT OF BUSINESS YET."
THE BATMAN AGAIN, HUH? AND HOW'D YOU GET AWAY?
I'M A FAIRLY BIG MAN -- AS BIG AS THE BATMAN.
LANDED A LUCKY PUNCH... STUNNED HIM LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE A BREAK.

GOT HIM. BLACK MASK.
AH... MISTER FOX...

...THE HOSTILE TAKEOVER REVERSES ITSELF...
WELCOME TO MY HUMBLY MASKED ABODE. WHERE YOU SHALL BE SERVING AS A PRIME HOSTAGE...

...NOW THAT I HAVE JUST DECIDED TO DECLARE WAR.
CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE:
FACES of DEATH

BAT-SIGNALS

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'ello, 'ello, 'ello. Since, as of today, we have not received a single piece of mail on BATMAN #477 (going biweekly may be cool, but it wreaks havoc on letter-columns), I'm going to be running letters on some of our recent and not-so-recent special projects.

I think we'll start off with a certain graphic novel about a couple o' vampires, written by the author of the story you just read.

And there's the flag...

Dear Denny,

When I first saw the promos for the Batman/Dracula "Red Rain" graphic novel I thought it looked like an interesting concept—plus two of my all-time favorites comprised the creative team behind the effort. No matter how high I set my personal expectations, though, they were still overshadowed by the actual product.

Doug Moench has been one of my favorite writers for well over a decade now and, with the publication of this latest effort, a lot of the newer converts to comicdom are going to discover how talented he truly is. Plus, his BATMAN and DETECTIVE stories have always been my personal favorites. He turned in another great Bat effort this time around, and I sincerely hope you allow him to do something with Ra's al Ghul and Talia at some future point in time.

Kelley Jones is, well...an artistic *genius*. The layouts this man employs to advance his craft are near flawless, and I found my jaw literally sagging at several different junctures in the book. He's able to bring a wide variety of emotions to and out of the product, and that's pretty rare today. The way he arranged his panels helped accentuate Doug's story that much more, and he also managed to confront the readers and force them to run an emotional gantlet beginning with the first panel of the first page and ending with the last panel of the last page. Happiness, pain, joy, despair and several other emotions were represented quite nicely via his visuals, and I commend him for this remarkable body of work. It has to be his best to date.

As long as DC keeps putting out the ELSEWORLDS series I'll continue to purchase them.

Peace.
Uncle Elvis
Dawson Springs, KY

As long as you keep purchasing them, Unc, we'll keep putting them out—so, I guess you'll be interested in the next Doug Moench/Kelley Jones/Malcolm Jones ELSEWORLDS graphic novel, due out in...but, no, I've said too much already...

We're pretty pleased with Doug, too—so much so that we managed to talk him into taking on this here regular writing assignment. Wasn't easy, mind you, but Denny's forgotten more about arguing than most people will ever know.

And now a missive on a book by one of our other regular Bat-authors...

Editor,

Pairing Batman's principles with Judge Dredd's ruthlessness was a storytelling decision fraught with potential pitfalls—but navigated with utmost professionalism by Grant, Wagner and Bisley. What a gasl JUDGMENT ON GOTHAM is simply the year's most enjoyable comic book. At last we get to see Bruce Wayne stripped to his leotard, battling corrupt Mega-City One cops in all his muscle-bound splendor. And the Scarecrow deserves special mention for his hilariously chilling guest appearance. It's another instant classic, folks; keep 'em coming!

Steve Beery
San Francisco, CA

You keep purchasing them, Steve, and we'll keep 'em coming. Glad you liked JUDGMENT so much—and you weren't the only one; a signing by the creators not only drew several hundred happy fans and was five hours longer than expected, it attracted more people than came to see David Bowie a week before. 'Course, what's a rock star compared to the Batman?

Corrupt cops? I'm not sure Dredd's so much corrupt as...politically incorrect. Either way, I wouldn't let him hear you say it.

And now a few notes (carefully selected from the tons of mail we received) on a miniseries by yet another Bat-writer, that ROBIN II thang...

Hey, Denny and Kelley,

Re: ROBIN II—THE JOKER'S WILD #4

Wow. Now, *this* is a Robin story.

From the awesome, final hologram cover from Eduardo Barreto to the return of the Lyle-Smith art team we all know and love on the opening two pages (especially the beautiful page two) to the plan conceived and set in motion by Tim Drake himself to the final confrontation between Robin and the Joker to the wicked last page, ROBIN II #4 was probably one of the best comics I have read this year (and trust me, I have read some awesome ones). I don't think I can put down on paper the feelings that were zipping through me while I read this classic. Chuck Dixon and Lyle/Smith all deserve to be honored in some way—probably by fans voting this the best miniseries of 1991.

You earned it, you guys. I can't say enough how awesome the art was this issue—I'm talking frameable work, Tom and Bob. I hope that you, Tom, will continue this awesome work throughout your soon-to-come run on DETECTIVE.

As for the future of Tim Drake, I would most love a regular series, but if you guys can keep these annual (I hope) miniseries as special as they have been, I won't be complaining. But if Tim is not going to get his own series (and isn't being included in either the JL or the Titans) can we at least give him a quarterly or an annual or something? Tim (as well as Chuck, Tom and Bob) deserves it.

Robin Rules!
Jason Crase
Arlington Heights, IL

Well, Jason, you keep pur...no, no, I'm sorry, I meant *to say that by now you've already read the ROBIN annual and are anxiously awaiting—yes, it's true, boys and girls—ROBIN !!!! Brought to you by that amazing team of Dixon, Lyle and Smith, and guaranteed to blow you away.*

Dear Denny and Kelley,

Robin (Tim Drake) is wonderful—intelligent, strong, thoughtful, and talented, not to mention incredibly good-looking. Would he be interested in an older (only by one year, mind you) woman?

Catgirl

I know there's something really funny I could say here; and I wish I could think of it.

Denny and Kelley,

On page 17 of ROBIN II #1, Tim wishes he had a driver's license. This got me thinking. Does Batman have a license? I don't see how he could. He would need to show his full legal name and two forms of identification. There is no way he would carry around Bruce Wayne's, so I figure he must not have one. If this is the case, Robin might as well start driving now, since driving without a license is illegal no matter how old you are. Anyway, I'd really grateful if you could give me an explanation.

Jeremy Kirkland
Cape Coral, FL

Okay, Jeremy, there are a couple of ways of looking at the situation. 1) Bruce Wayne has a driver's license, and therefore Batman has proven he meets the legal requirements for operating a vehicle, as Bruce and Batman are in fact the same person. 2) Batman is a vigilante, and breaks lots of laws, albeit with Commissioner Gordon's slightly hesitant blessing. 3) Despite answer #2, Batman has a very strict code of ethics, which would never allow him to let Tim drive before he has legally passed the test. 4) The way things are now makes for quality time between Tim and Alfred and Tim and Batman. 5) Batman, extremely concerned about the environment, is waiting until Detroit unveils their new electric motorcycles. 6) All of the above. 7) None of the above 8) Forty-two.

And since the printers butchered the letter column in the last issue of GOTHAM NIGHTS, here—for the first time anywhere—are the letters that were supposed to see print. And only three months late! We join Nat Merriam's missive, already in progress...

people whose first instinct after buying a comic is NOT to bag it, but to read it.

Nat Merriam
14906 Kimberly
Houston, TX 77079

Dear Denny, John, Mary, etc.:

I just had to tell you how I thoroughly enjoyed the first issue of GOTHAM NIGHTS. John Ostrander's work is always a good enough reason to pick up any comic, but even his excellent writing in this book was overshadowed by the sheer wonder of Mary Mitchell's art! I can't stop staring at page 4. Mary does a wonderful job of taking up the changes to the Gotham skyline based on (the late) Anton Furst's designs and showing just what the new/old Gotham should look like. Amazing!

Just as compelling are her portraits of the individuals who make up Gotham City, and John's portrayals of their lives. There must be millions of people in the city who have never glimpsed Batman, and when these folks do, they just take it in stride. After all, they have their own rather complicated lives to lead. Each of them has a story to be told, and the ones spotlighted in this issue immediately found their way into my heart. John easily tells us volumes about each of them, and makes us care about their fates (I really sympathized with Jimmy, really felt for the old man, and identified totally with the donut lady!—Hmmm, maybe that should tell me something).

It's about time a comic book dealt with just people, instead of the super-people who protect them. Hoping for a monthly series may be too much like to ask for this kind of quality every thirty days?), but if we could be treated to another miniseries like this one during the summer—? Maybe even do Metropolis as a change of pace...

You guys done good. Thanks for a truly enjoyable book. I can't wait to see what fate awaits these people, as their stories continue in issue #2. Thanks again.

David M. Lambert
Memphis, TN

Dear Mr. Ostrander,

I wish to complain about this false advertising in your comic book GOTHAM NIGHTS. I checked every page of this comic book, and there was only one night in the whole thing, and that didn't show up until page 20 of 23. I really think you ought to retitle this book BULK OF A GOTHAM DAY AND A WEE BIT OF NIGHT, just for honesty's sake.

I mean, there are far more doughnuts (excuse me, "donuts") in this book than there are nights, but you didn't call it GOTHAM DONUTS, did you?

And another thing: it's bad enough that in the past you let a girl co-write your comics, but this time you actually had a girl *artist*. What is this world coming to? Mark my words, one of these days there'll be a girl comic book publisher, and then the whole industry will go to Chicago in a handbasket!

Nat Gertler
I-8 E. Atlantic Ave.
Village Green
Hi-Nella, NJ 08083

You know, Nat, one of these days you're going to put your tongue so far in your cheek you're going to chew it off. "Hi-Nella"?

Dear John, Mary, Denny, etc.

This is my first letter to a comic book (that's something after 25 years of reading) and it took a unique comic book to prompt it. GOTHAM NIGHTS captures a little piece of reality (or rather, many pieces) and makes this reader care about characters I've never seen before and may never see again after issue #4. This is John's finest work (and I've been following him for about 8 years now) and Mary Mitchell is an unexpected pleasure. The details in the background of many of the panels, the characters we only see fleetingly and wonder what their story is, all contribute to make a superb story. The comics-reading public may not be ready for a regular GOTHAM NIGHTS title, but more miniseries of this type would be most welcome. Bravo to all involved.

John Sardegna
79 Hettys Path
Farmingville, NY 11738

Dear Batfolks,

Just in case you thought there was nobody in comics who knew how to write about ordinary people...

This is without a doubt the finest piece of work I've seen about Batman in *years* (It's been "years" since John and Flint's unauthorized Batman comic, hasn't it?)—a wonderful reminder that there are *millions* of people in Gotham City who've never even seen the Batman. And they're all just as interesting as the Joker and all other gaily clad characters jumping from rooftop to rooftop in the same (hell, the *page*...) where Batman races through the station...everybody turns and looks, it becomes the topic of conversation for about 45 seconds, and then everybody goes on with their lives. Truly exquisite.

I could compare this book favorably with *The Naked City*, but I'm afraid not enough people would grasp the depth of this compliment.

Vinnie Bartilucci
45 Newburgh St.
Elmont, NY 11003

NEXT ISSUE: Well, there *isn't* a next issue of GOTHAM NIGHTS, not at this time, anyway; however, sales have been very good and response has been staggering, so the possibilities are definitely there. A few extra thank-you's just to fill up the space—first of all, to Dennis O'Neil, Da Boss and Bat-Guru Extraordinaire, who went for the idea immediately and supported my choice of Mary Mitchell from the word go. Also, his two assistants, Kelley Puckett and, later, Scott Peterson, who did all the necessary drudge work. Special thanks to Eduardo Barreto for his four stunning covers; this is a man whose work I vastly admire. To the folks in Production, thanks for the extra care, the design of the logo, and all that. To advertising (especially Patty Jeres) who got excited by the book and really pushed it hard. A book that is as "different" as GOTHAM NIGHTS needs that extra nuturing. Also to Paul Levitz, who took an active interest. Thanks for the suggestion of the helicopter tour—it paid off well (and thanks for having DC pick up that tab!).

My wife, Kim Yale, gets a thanks and a kiss because I love her and I feel like it and I like saying it in print and this will make her giggle and blush.

Thanks to all the retailers who got behind this book and to you, the reader, for trying it. If you like this kind of storytelling, write DC, write Paul Levitz, let them know you appreciate it, let your retailer know you'd support it. We're here to give you what you want. If you want more stories like Gotham Nights (or just more GOTHAM NIGHTS), drop us a postcard or a letter and tell us.

As for me, well—I hope you're picking up HAWKWORLD, ARMAGEDDON: INFERNO, and the Penguin graphic novel. I'll be doing some more Bat-related titles and, later this year, Tom Mandrake and I will be relaunching The Spectre. And don't forget to pick up all the current Batman titles (as if it were possible to forget with *Batman Returns* all over the place).

All the best.

—John Ostrander

OVER IN SHADOW OF THE BAT: On sale now, it's the conclusion of "The Last Arkham..." Batman finally figures out who's behind all the ghastly murders, but can he escape Arkham Asylum in time to stop them, or will he be the next victim? The answers are in SHADOW OF THE BAT #4, "Crime and Punishment," brought to you by Alan Grant and Norm Breyfogle.

OVER IN DETECTIVE: On sale in one week, it's the conclusion of "The Return of the Cluemaster." Can the Batman stop the Cluemaster from pulling off his most outrageous scheme yet, or will more people have to die? The answers are yours in seven short days, courtesy of Messrs. Grant, Lyle and Hanna, with a cover by Matt Wagner. DETECTIVE COMICS #649.

NEXT ISSUE: Lucius Fox is trapped in Black Mask's lair, and only one person can save him—the person Black Mask unmasks to find—Bruce Wayne! BATMAN #485 by Doug Moench and guest artists Tom Grindberg and Trevor Scott. Be there. Adios.

—Scott Peterson
spent too much time
at Caramba's

From the Den

Mad Magazine has always been funny. But I think it's been educational, too. It's taught the lessons that teachers could not, dare not and maybe shouldn't teach in the classroom. Lesson like: Old is not necessarily good. Authority isn't always right. Everyone is sometimes silly. Institutions can fail. Goofiness is preferable to pomposity.

Mad has been the product of one man's vision—one very nice man who had a kind of genius I can't even name. He had a gift for inspiring others, for generating the kind of loyalty that prompted creative folk to do their best work simply because they wanted to please him.

His name was Bill Gaines. He died recently. Those of us who knew him, even slightly, will miss his presence in the world. It is a drearier place because he is no longer in it, but it is an infinitely brighter place because he once was.

DENNY

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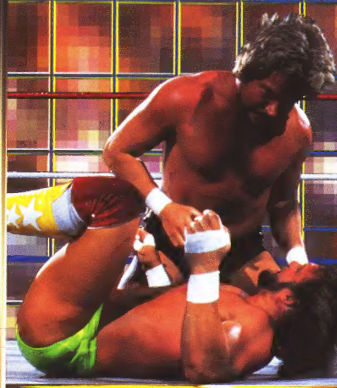

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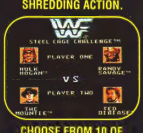

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